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ANZOLETTA ZADOSKI.

ANZOLETTA

ZADOSKI.

A NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

MRS. HOWELL,

AUTHOR OF GEORGINA, &c. &c.

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ANZOLETTA ŻADOSKI.

"I Rate *the world*; *but as* 'the *world*; *A Stage, where every man muſt play his part*,' ſaid Lord Fitz-Vernon to a plain-looking lady who was ſeated in his carriage beſide him, "and have as yet had too little proof of the ſolidity of its pleaſures to form my

opinions and views of happineſs by the caprice of its giddy votaries, I ſhall therefore purſue my own plan of domeſtic comfort, unreſtrained by the fears of their ridicule, and content myſelf to let them laugh, provided I am happy."

"And ſo, then," ſaid Lady Frances, "you will really ſell the town-houſe, and immure yourſelf and us in that gloomy old fabrick Fitz-Vernon Hall, a place I have heard a moſt horrid account of, and juſt arrived at the poſſeſſion of an ancient title and ſplendid fortune, mope away your exiſtence with the auſterity of an hermit?"

"By

"By no means," replied Lord Fitz-Vernon, "there is nothing ſo very terrific to my imagination in paſſing my time on the ſpot inhabited by my anceſtors, as to exclude the idea of ſocial comfort, eſpecially while you and Lady Bell ſhall continue to favor me with your ſociety."

A bow and ſmile of acknowledgment was returned him by the lady who ſat oppoſite to him, and whoſe once lovely form ſeemed rapidly falling to decay under the oppreſſive hand of ſickneſs.

And Lady Frances thus continued to vent her chagrin.—" And ſo, to become the Lady Bountifuls of a paltry village, and be dragged about over your Lordſhip's dirty acres in the old family coach, ſeems to me to be all the advantages we are likely to reap from this acceſſion of fortune. Beſides, your Lordſhip may take it into your head to marry and then——"

" You will ſtill find me a friend and a brother, as tender of your happineſs, and as zealous for its promotion as my own. But do you not think I ſhall be more expoſed to danger," proceeded he, " laughing amidſt the crowded circles of St.

James's, than in the ſolitude you are ſo terrified at, unleſs, indeed, your Ladyſhip conſiders the proſpect of your own eſtabliſhment as more probable in the regions of taſte and faſhion, than in the ruſtic neighbourhood of Fitz-Vernon Hall?"

"I aſſure you I have no ſuch ridiculous notion," returned the lady, with an air of reſentment, "though perhaps many people with leſs pretenſions have been eligibly married at my time of life."

"Doubtleſs, my good ſiſter," ſaid his Lordſhip, "there are many men whoſe years and mature judgment would lead them to prefer a ſedate,

diſcreet woman of forty to the beautiful and giddy romp of fifteen."

"You grow impertinent, Sir," ſaid Lady Frances, with much emotion, "let us drop the ſubject. How far are we off this odious place?"

"If your Ladyſhip will turn your fair eyes towards the wood on your left," rejoined my Lord, "you will clearly diſcern the turrets of the Hall —another half hour will bring us to its gates."

The intervening time elapſed in a ſullen ſilence on the part of Lady Frances; nor was her diſcontent at all leſſened by the appearance Fitz-Vernon

Vernon Hall preſented. The maſſy gates, the Gothic portal, and the ſable liveries of the old domeſtics, who conducted them to an antique parlour, wainſcotted with oak, whoſe ſombros gloom, not even the large logs of wood which blazed in the ſpacious chimney could illume—all contributed to ſadden her imagination; and, after formally congratulating her brother on his arrival at the ſeat of his progenitors, deſired her maid to ſhew her to her apartments. Lady Bell alſo ſoon retired, to endeavour to recruit her exhauſted ſtrength which the fatigue of the journey had impaired, and the

Earl was left alone to ruminate on his plans of future happineſs.

Lord Fitz-Vernon, who by the deceaſe of a paternal uncle, had, as before obſerved, lately arrived at the poſſeſſion of his title and eſtates, was at this period in the thirty-fifth year of his age, gifted with an acute and ſound underſtanding, a benevolent heart, and a perſon rather intereſting and elegant than ſtrictly handſome. He had the misfortune to loſe his parents early in life; and the very ſlender fortunes bequeathed to his ſiſters, and their unprotected ſituation, together with the naturally ſedentary turn

turn of his own diſpoſition, induced him, in the prime of life, to reſign his commiſſion in the army, and retire with them to a calm and pleaſant retirement in a little village near London. Lady Frances, it was true, was ſome years his ſenior, and might conſequently be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs ſufficient diſcretion to conduct herſelf without the immediate inſpection of her brother; but her Ladyſhip, who choſe to paſs over ſeveral years of her exiſtence in ſilence, preferred the appearance of reſtraint, which her brother's reſidence with her ſeemed to imply to that agreeable freedom of thought and action which ſo many ladies,

ladies, *of a certain age*, appear ſo well to know how to value and enjoy. She had alſo for a long period of time looked forward to an addition of fortune at the death of the late Earl, who was not only a batchelor, but, from the extreme parſimony of his temper, and a ſhattered conſtitution, unlikely to marry; and theſe anticipations of future wealth and conſequence had induced her to reject ſeveral offers, by which ſhe might have been *comfortably* ſettled in the world. As for Lady Iſabell, her melancholy turn of mind and weak health, ſeemed to render her the more peculiar object of her brother's tenderneſs

derneſs and care. Her ſweetneſs of temper and gentle manners were alſo congenial to his own; and it was this dear and amiable ſiſter who formed the leading motive for the life of retirement Lord Fitz-Vernon had reſolved on.

At the death of the late Earl, the family were reſiding at Liſbon, by the advice of Lady Iſabell's phyſicians; and her ſiſter, though not unintereſted in her recovery, had ſpared no pains to accelerate their return to England, as ſoon as the news of their uncle's demiſe reached them—full of ideas, of conqueſts, equipages, and prece-

dence;

dence; all which ardent aſpirations were, however, prematurely checked by the determination of her brother to reſide at the Hall: and though ſhe ſighed for the pleaſures of the capital and the buſtle of a town-life, yet had ſhe too much veneration for her brother's to think of quitting his protection. And Lord Fitz-Vernon, on his ſide, though he foreſaw much future anxiety from her diſlike to ſolitude, was too much of a philoſopher to ſuffer his plan to be fruſtrated by female petulance and diſappointed vanity.

After

After a ſlight and unſocial repaſt, he returned to reſt, having previouſly ordered Mr. Manly, his ſteward, to attend him early in the morning.

At eight the following day, in conſequence of theſe commands, Mr. Manly waited on his Lordſhip; and, after apologizing for not being able to attend him the preceding evening, and humbly preſuming to hope that his long and faithful ſervices to his deceaſed uncle would procure him a continuance of his Lordſhip's favor, and an aſſurance, on the part of the new Earl, that he ſhould always find him ſenſible of merit in whatever

ſituation he found it. They deſcended to the terrace, from whence Lord Fitz-Vernon proceeded to make a ſhort tour of his grounds.

"And whoſe is that neat little manſion," ſaid he, pointing to a modern-built houſe, well ſurrounded with wood on the left; "I do not recollect it when I was a boy, and uſed to viſit the Hall."

Mr. Manly, with ſomething like a bluſh, replied, "that his late Lord having been pleaſed to permit him to reſide there rent-free, he had *humbly* (Mr Manly was a man of great humility in his outward deportment) conceived it

it his duty to keep it in as good repair as his little income would permit, as well for his own convenience as that its appearance might form an agreeable view from the windows of the Hall; for this purpoſe he had indeed new-fronted it, built an additional wing, incloſed it with a green paliſade, and drawn the current of an adjacent river into a kind of canal through his garden."

Lord Fitz-Vernon liſtened to his recital in ſilence; and ſoon after paſſing the church-yard, took occaſion to obſerve that the parſonage-houſe was in great want of repair, and appeared rapidly

rapidly falling to decay: it was, in truth, a melancholy ſpectacle, being half unroofed, and the walls which ſurrounded it almoſt reduced to an unformed maſs of rubbiſh.

"Why to be ſure, my Lord," ſaid Mr. Manly, in a dubious tone, "the place is a little out of repair or ſo; but the rector lives in the town, and Mr Brady his curate having but a ſmall income, and keeping a ſchool, my noble patron had ſome thoughts of giving him the little cottage at the end of the wood to live in, as ſoon as I could get rid of the Poliſh man who now inhabits it;—it is no great things to be ſure, and he pays a good rent for it; but it would ſuit the curate well enough,

and

and your Lordſhip might build, at a ſmall expence, (for there is plenty of timber fit to cut in the park) a nice, neat little modern box, which might induce the rector and his family to live here—a very converſible man is the rector, I aſſure your Lordſhip, and his wife and daughters very pretty kind of Ladies."

"But who is the perſon you term the Poliſh man?" ſaid Lord Fitz-Vernon, interrupting the eulogium he was preparing to make on the rector's family.

"Oh, a ſtrange, out-of-the-way kind of being, keeps no company but the curate's, but does many charitable

things, they ſay; as for my own part, I think both he and the girl that lives with him no better than they ſhould be."

They had now reached the gates which led to the ſteward's houſe, and Mr. Manly, with much humility, entreated the Earl to honour him by entering his little manſion; a requeſt his Lordſhip, with his uſual condeſcenſion, complied with, and was inſtantly introduced into an elegant parlour, where Mrs. Manly and her two daughters were ſitting. The good woman aroſe, in ſome ſmall degree of confuſion, to acknowledge the mighty

mighty honor done her by his Lordſhip; while the young ladies, who were equipped at all points in the extreme of faſhion, entered into an eaſy converſation with him on the amuſements and manners of the day, in a ſtile which rather ſurpriſed Lord Fitz-Vernon, when he recollected that, a few years before, he had ſeen Mr. Manly attend the ſide-board of his uncle, while his wife preſided over the ſtore-room and kitchen.—At length his meditations (for the ladies ſupported the diſcourſe on their ſide with no ſmall ſpirit and volubility, notwithſtanding the apparent indifference or reſerve of their noble gueſt)

were interrupted by the ſound of Mr. Manly's voice at the door, who, in no very placid tone, ſeemed to reprehend ſome perſon for intruding on his houſe, and preſuming to trouble his Lordſhip, who, he ſaid, was otherwiſe engaged.

"But the urgency of the occaſion," returned the offender, "will ſurely plead my excuſe to a man of his Lordſhip's humanity, and the poor gentleman is probably at the point of death."

Lord Fitz-Vernon, by an involuntary impulſe, now roſe and opened the door, where ſtood Mr. Manly talking to

to a pale, yet not unintereſting figure of a man, dreſſed in a ſuit of ruſty black.

"May it pleaſe your Lordſhip," ſaid the ſteward, here is Mr. Brady the curate come with an odd kind of meſſage from the Poliſh man, who, they ſay, is juſt expiring, and requeſts to ſee your Lordſhip: it is to be ſure a very impertinent thing to follow your Honour here, but I hope you will have the goodneſs to believe I had no hand in it."

"I cannot conceive," cried Lord Fitz-Vernon, what his buſineſs can be with me—Mr. Brady will, however,

be ſo kind as to accompany me to him."

"Shall I attend your Lordſhip," ſaid the ſteward, in a ſoftened voice?

"It is immaterial," replied the Earl, as he took the arm of the curate and deſcended the ſteps.

But Mr. Manly, though a little diſcouraged at his tone and manner, judged it proper to follow him to the cottage.

In their way thither, Lord Fitz-Vernon very naturally inquired of Mr. Brady, "If he knew who the ſtranger

ſtranger (for ſuch he ſuppoſed he was) might be?"

"The Signior Polletti," replied the curate, "has reſided here near a twelvemonth, together with the young lady he calls his niece, in the ſtricteſt retirement; and it is not till within theſe few weeks that he has been confined to his bed by ſickneſs that I have been honoured by his confidence. During this period, he has frequently expreſſed an extreme anxiety for the return of your Lordſhip, of which he deſired to be informed; and this morning, being warned by his phyſicians of his approaching diſſolution, he ſent for me,

entreating me to ſolicit the honor of your preſence for a few moments; and not finding your Lordſhip at the Hall, and conſidering the melancholy ſtate of the Signior, I ventured to follow you to Mr. Manly's, a liberty I truſt, my Lord, you will have the goodneſs to excuſe."

Lord Fitz-Vernon replied, "that an apology was totally unneceſſary."

And being now arrived at the little dwelling of the Signior Polletti, on announcing themſelves to the old woman, who ſerved them in quality of domeſtic, they were inſtantly ſhewn into the apartment of the invalid, where

where his Lordſhip's attention was arreſted by an object, calculated to awaken the feelings of humanity in a heart much leſs attuned to the gentle voice of ſympathy and compaſſion than was that of Lord Fitz-Vernon. An elderly man, at the point of diſſolution, lay extended on a plain, but clean bed, whoſe venerable air and placid countenance might have excited the idea of a dying Saint, while a young female, of extreme beauty, knelt by his ſide, and bathed his almoſt lifeleſs hand with her tears. His Lordſhip approached the bed, and, in a tone of the tendereſt ſympathy, demanded

demanded of the ſick ſtranger in what he could ſerve him?

Polletti raiſed his eyes to him, in a look which ſpoke him ſenſible of the benevolence his manner expreſſed; and pointing to the weeping girl, he, in a faltering voice, informed him, it was to implore his protection for the unfortunate daughter of a noble houſe that he had ſolicited this viſit. "You will probably be ſurpriſed, my Lord," continued the Signior, "when I tell you it is by command of a father, who is no ſtranger to your worth, that I entreat your care of her; nor think that ſhe will prove an incumbrance on

your

your bounty. In that box," ſaid Polletti, pointing to a ſmall black trunk, "you will find ſecurities for the ſum of two thouſand pounds, veſted in the funds of this country, in the name of Anzoletta Zadoſki, and a large ſupply of ready caſh. Say, then, my Lord, will you accept this precious truſt? In two years ſhe will probably be reclaimed by her unhappy parent, when you will rejoice at the recognition of the perſon you have obliged: in the mean time, an inviolable ſecrecy muſt involve her deſtiny. And if, alas! unable with *ſafety* to acknowledge this lovely child, that period ſhould elapſe in ſilence, then will

will your Lordſhip have the goodneſs to employ the little fortune ſhe will poſſeſs, in ſuch a manner as your judgment ſhall direct. But, above all things, let me exact your promiſe not to diſpoſe of her hand during the ſpace of time I have mentioned."

Anzoletta at this minute, with a deep ſigh, raiſed her bluſhing face from the hand of Polletti, which it had hitherto reclined on, and preſented to the aſtoniſhed Fitz-Vernon features ſo regular, a countenance ſo ſweetly indicative of ſenſibility and ſorrow, as wakened every latent ſenſe of compaſſion in his boſom.

"Yes,"

"Yes," ſaid his Lordſhip, taking her hand with the moſt reſpectful tenderneſs, "I accept the guardianſhip of this lovely girl; and I ſwear to you, Polletti, faithfully to diſcharge the truſt repoſed in me, as I hope for heaven."

The Signior expreſſed his gratitude in terms ſuitable to the occaſion; but his weakneſs growing every moment more alarming, Lord Fitz-Vernon took his leave, after repeating his proteſtation to adhere faithfully to his beheſt, and conjuring the young lady to honour him with her commands as ſoon as the loſs of her preſent guardian

dian ſhould render his advice neceſſary. Anzoletta thanked him with a modeſty and frankneſs that charmed him, and he retired to ruminate on the ſtrangeneſs of the adventure that had befallen him, attended by Mr. Manly, who followed him in ſilence.

An occurrence ſo unexpected, ſo uncommon, could not fail to give birth to much ſerious reflection in the mind of Lord Fitz-Vernon, whoſe curioſity, no leſs than compaſſion, was ſtrongly intereſted in the fate of his new protegee; yet he juſtly conſidered that, to ſearch further into the myſtery that enveloped her hiſtory, would

would be a breach of his promiſe: and though fully reſolved to take her under his immediate care and protection, he felt no ſmall embarraſſment at the idea of preſenting her to his ſiſters in ſo doubtful a character. At this juncture, his reverie was interrupted by Mr. Manly, who, begging his Lordſhip's pardon for his preſumption, ventured to inquire "what might be his deſigns for the young lady at the cottage in caſe the old man ſhould die, which was an event apparently on the eve of taking place?"

"It was the very ſubject on which I was meditating," replied the Peer.

"The

"The charming girl is certainly of no common rank, and is doubtleſs entitled to all the reſpect I can ſhew her. I ſhall therefore place her under the care of my ſiſters; but as it is a point which requires much delicacy and mature deliberation, I ſhould ſuppoſe Mrs. Manly would accommodate her for a ſhort time, as the curate's eſtabliſhment is I fear on too narrow a ſcale to receive ſuch a gueſt."

The complaiſant ſteward, though not perfectly pleaſed with the preference of the curate's family, which he fancied his Lordſhip's ſpeech implied, would have been given, had his preſent ſtile of living been adequate to what the

noble Peer desired for his young ward, yet assured his Lordship, "that Mrs. Manly would be proud to render every attention to Miss Zadoski in her power." He had also another reason to smother his dislike to the whole proceeding of his patron and the Signior in this affair, and affect a zeal and interest for her service.

Mr. Manly, whose influence over the mind of the late Earl had been very considerable, and having been intrusted with the entire management of his concerns, had found means to realize, in a few years, a sum of money which fully qualified him, in his own

to *live* what he termed a *little* genteelly, and had; in conſequence, educated his offſpring in a ſtile much better ſuited to his own aſpiring wiſhes than their real pretenſions claimed. The eldeſt of this hopeful family was a ſon, who at this period had juſt attained his twenty-ſecond year: a country boarding-ſchool had furniſhed him with a competent knowledge of writing and arithmetic; and by the partiality of the deceaſed Earl, who was his godfather, and permitted him the uſe of his horſes, with the liberty of ſporting on his manors, he was early initiated in rural diverſions, added to which, a natural taſte for diſſipation, (which his

his fond parents weakly indulged) and a large ſhare of ſelf-conceit, conſpired to render him in his own eyes, and indeed in thoſe of all the farmer's daughters of the neighbourhood, that happy combination of eaſy indifference, ignorance, and aſſurance, that, in ſome much higher circles than the vicinity of Fitz-Vernon Hall, is denominated a *pretty fellow*.

The charms of the young and elegant Anzoletta could hardly be ſuppoſed to paſs unnoticed by this *village gallant*; and the myſterious manner in which ſhe was ſecluded from ſociety, was an additional ſtimulus to his deſire

of adding to the liſt of his conqueſt this lovely and almoſt friendleſs female.—The ſtrict retirement impoſed on her by the vigilant care of Poletti, had been, however, no ſmall obſtacle to this laudable deſign, as it rendered it extremely difficult to obtain an interview with her.

It was in vain that he had endeavoured to gain admiſſion at the cottage, by ſending preſents of game, fruit, &c. for the Signior, with a reſerve almoſt bordering on rudeneſs, had conſtantly refuſed to accept them, alledging that his ſituation not permitting him to make a ſimilar return

of

civilities, he ſhould feel himſelf conſtrained by the receipt of obligations it was not in his power to repay. Chagrined at being thus foiled in his advances towards an intimacy with a man who he conceived ought to ſet high value on his condeſcenſion, and piqued that the marked attentions which he had ſhewn to Anzoletta (whom he had ſometimes met on a viſit to Mrs. Brady) ſhould fail to impreſs her with reciprocal ſentiments in his favour, young Manly had of late been accuſtomed to ſpeak to her in their caſual meetings in a ſtile of freedom and impertinence, that his father, who was no ſtranger to this

part of his ſon's character, was, above all things, anxious to conceal from the knowledge of his Lord; and he flattered himſelf that by rendering himſelf ſerviceable to Anzoletta, and receiving her into his family, her gratitude would prevent her from divulging any circumſtances that might tend to injure him in the eſteem of his noble patron.

Lord Fitz-Vernon had ſcarcely had time, on his return to the Hall, to acquaint his ſiſters with the ſtrange adventure which had befallen him in his morning's excurſion, before a meſſenger arrived to announce the death of

of the Signior; and as Lady Frances had ſtarted ſome objections in reſpect to the propriety of admitting the young ſtranger to reſide with them at the Hall, it was agreed that Miſs Zadoſki ſhould be requeſted by the Earl to remove to Mr. Manly's, as a temporary reſidence, to whom a meſſage was alſo diſpatched, commanding him, on the part of his Lord, to ſhew every attention to his fair ward, and obſerve an implicit obedience to her directions for the funeral obſequies of Poletti. This was a command which Mr. Manly no longer felt any reluctance to comply with; for having viſited the cottage the moment he

was informed of the demiſe of the Signior, (an event which he privately entreated the old woman to give him the earlieſt intelligence of) and examined the contents of the black trunk; which not only contained the ſecurities deſcribed by Poletti, together with two hundred pounds in notes and caſh, but ſeveral jewels, which he juſtly conceived to be of conſiderable value; and among which was the inſigna of the Poliſh Order of the White Eagle, richly adorned with diamonds. Then it entered into his head, that the little Pole muſt be ſomebody of conſequence; and having a pretty trifle of money at her own

own diſpoſal, together with what the jewels might fetch, ſhe would be no very ineligible wife for his ſon; and as for the injunctions of the deceaſed Signior in reſpect to her marriage, why, if the young folks liked each other, and her grand relations came to claim her, *what was done could not be undone*; and Tom was deſcended of honeſt parents, and was, moreover, (in the eyes of his father) a *very pretty gentleman.*

In this manner did Mr. Manly reaſon within himſelf as he conducted Anzoletta to his houſe, after having, with a flood of tears, bid farewell to

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the cold remains of her venerable friend; and full of this project, introduced her to his family as the ward of his noble patron; at the ſame time aſſuring his daughters, (whoſe eyes were fixed on Anzoletta with rude and eager curioſity) "that the lady proved to be quite another kind of a perſon from what they had taken her to be, and therefore he deſired they would ſhew her all poſſible civility."

The table was now covered for dinner, (for this polite family dined at the ſame faſhionable hour as their Lord) and Mrs Manly perceiving her young viſitor too much afflicted to do

honour to her poultry and pudding, began to conſole her (as ſhe thought) for the loſs ſhe had ſuſtained, by expatiating on her good fortune in having found ſo noble a guardian as Lord Fitz-Vernon; at the ſame time, hinted her ſurpriſe at the ſum of money ſhe proved to be poſſeſſed of, (a circumſtance of which Mr. Manly had not failed to inform his wife when he commanded her to prepare for the reception of the fair ſtranger) while the young ladies warmly proffered their ſervice in aſſiſting her in the choice of her mourning. "For to be ſure, Miſs," ſaid the elder, "as you have ſo much

much money, you will chuſe to appear a little genteelly on the occaſion ?"

Anzoletta, whoſe mourning was in the *heart*, left theſe arrangements entirely to their direction. And after apologizing to Mrs. Manly for the dejection of ſpirits which rendered her at preſent unfit for company, was by the younger daughter ſhewn to a ſmall but neat bed-chamber, that had been prepared for her reception ; and Anzoletta was now left at leiſure to reflect on the ſtrange ſeries of events which had conſpired to place her at at a diſtance from her native country. Ignorant of the rank or ſituation of her parents,

parents, and bereft of the kind and tender protection of him who was *all* to her under the guardianſhip of Lord Fitz-Vernon, who was totally a ſtranger to her. Doubtful and apprehenſive for the future, Anzoletta could not but recur with fond regret to the placid hours ſhe had paſſed in her convent, (for it was with the Sœurs de St. Lewis ſhe had received the firſt rudiments of her education) and could hardly ſuppreſs the wiſh that ſhe had embraced, like them, the *hallowed tranquillity of the cloiſter*. Thoſe bliſsful days, too, when unknown to the deception and turpitude of mankind, her imagination had painted on her, emerging

emerging from the gloom of a monaſtery, and accompanying Poletti to the gay and ſerene climate of Italy, the world as teaming with ſcenes of never-fading happineſs, when the mild breeze of morning, and the ſoftened beams of the riſing ſun, had wakened her to new and variegated proſpects of felicity, while liſtening to the elegant inſtructions of the venerable Poletti, her underſtanding every day expanded, and her heart opened to the impreſſions of virtue and benevolence. From retroſpections ſo ſweet, ſo dear to memory, ſhe turned with horror to reflect on the awful moment, when, during a haſty flight from their

recluſive

reclusive and peaceable abode to the port of Civitta Vecchia, she had gathered from the agitated exclamations of her fond protector, the dreadful intelligence, that *a rich reward was set on her head*; and, unconscious of having created or desired to have an enemy, learned that the only relatives whose power could protect her unguarded innocence, instigated by a barbarous and sanguinary revenge, panted for her destruction.—The various arts which had been employed by Poletti to render their residence unknown till their arrival at the cottage, filled her mind with wonder and anxiety. That she had a father still existing,

exiſting, his dying words (for the firſt time) declared; but, alas! what was the myſterious fate of this unhappy parent, or what circumſtances prevented his reclaiming his unfortunate child?—her imagination was tortured and bewildered in attempting to conjecture. That his birth and rank was of a ſuperior degree ſhe had no doubt; the elegant accompliſhments ſhe had acquired at the convent; the unremitting pains which the Signior had taken to inſpect and perfect her in whatever ſtudies could contribute to fortify and embelliſh her mind, and give grace and energy to her manners, were ſuch as ſeemed by no means adapted

adapted to a young woman deſtined to paſs through life in obſcurity, or perhaps obtain, by toil and induſtry, a ſcanty ſubſiſtence.—Anzoletta alſo poſſeſſed a kind of native pride and intuitive elegance, which, though not excluded from the offspring of more humble parents, is ſeldom found amidſt the children of penury and obſcurity. The choice of Lord Fitz-Vernon alſo for her guardian, which ſeemed a meaſure on which the mind of the Signior had been long and anxiouſly bent, confirmed theſe aſpiring ideas;—but why that tender friend ſhould have compelled her to remain in ignorance of her origin at an age

when the female underſtanding approaches to maturity, and the habits of childhood ripen into the ſolidity of fixed character, ſhe was at a loſs to imagine. But the diſcernment of Poletti was too juſt to ſuffer him to intruſt even his beloved charge with a ſecret that involved that precious life which his own had been exhauſted in anxious endeavours to preſerve, at a ſeaſon when the frankneſs of youth recoils from the appearance of myſtery, and when the ardency of imagination, incident to her early years, might render her incautious, and liable to deception from thoſe whom her ignorance of the world, and artleſs ſim-

plicity of temper, might tempt her to receive to her friendſhip with that full ſecurity of unſuſpecting confidence which forms a ſtriking and general feature in the character of unvitiated and ingenuous youth. Amidſt the melancholy ideas which the loſs of the Signior excited in the ſuſceptible boſom of Anzoletta, the conſideration that the ſecret of her birth had expired with him was not the leaſt painful. "Alas!" cried ſhe mentally, "the knowledge of my parents now ſinks into the oblivion of the grave; an alien to my country, (for as Livy expreſſes it, with the generous pride of patavinity, inſepa-

rable from exalted ſouls, he had often expatiated on the *former bleſſings* of the country which gave them birth, the kingdom of Poland, and deplored, with honeſt and genuine patriotiſm, the ſucceſs of that lawleſs ambition which had firſt diſmembered it by factions, and finally enſlaved it) unclaimed of any one, to whom do I appertain? or who now has any intereſt in my fate?"

Theſe agonizing reflections were at this moment interrupted by the entrance of Miſs Manly; who, after expreſſing her ſurpriſe at ſeeing her tears, and declaring "*She could not ſee what*

what ſhe had to cry for," deſired her to compoſe her features, and deſcend to the parlour, where Lord Fitz-Vernon's ſiſters were waiting for her.

Though the callous inſenſibility of Miſs Manly had contributed farther to increaſe that keen anxiety which agitated her boſom, Anzoletta felt gratified by the kindneſs and delicacy this viſit ſeemed to imply on the part of her future guardian,—a viſit prompted by curioſity in the mind of Lady Frances, and ſympathy in that of Lady Iſabel; for, as the language of domeſtics generally adapts its colouring to the diſpoſitions of their

ſuperiors, the former had learned from her confidential maid, that the men ſaid, the foreign lady whom my Lord had taken under his protection, was intolerably handſome; while Lady Bell had gleaned from her favorite attendant the knowledge that ſhe was *very* young, *very* amiable, and ſhe believed had been *very* unfortunate.—With a conſcious dignity that formed a ſtriking contraſt to the ſervility of her young companion, Anzoletta entered the apartment, where the ladies were ſitting in earneſt conference with Mrs. Manly, on the ſubject of her gueſt. The grace and propriety with which ſhe replied to their compliments

ments of condolence, and the grateful ſenſibility which ſhe expreſſed of the favor conferred on her by their viſit, equally gratified the pride of Lady Frances, and the ſenſibility of her gentle ſiſter; who, after recommending her to the care of Mrs. Manly in terms of the warmeſt regard, and entreating that ſhe would permit her the pleaſure of arranging the mode of her appearance, &c. Lady Iſabell preſſing her hand, with a tenderneſs in her manner which ſenſibly affected the dejected Anzoletta, departed, with a promiſe of ſeeing her ſoon again.

"Is ſhe not a charming girl?" ſaid Lady Iſabell to her ſiſter, on their road home. "What grace of manner! What expreſſion in her countenance! I hope my brother will permit her to reſide with us. I ſhall be delighted at having ſo ſweet a companion."

"You are a phyſiognomiſt, you know," returned Lady Frances, ſarcaſtically; "and it is not, therefore, wonderful that you ſhould conceive ſuch a ſudden friendſhip for a ſtranger: but I, whoſe leſs active imagination is not prone to form opinions on mere appearances (though I allow the girl ſeems modiſh and well bred) ſhall recommend the Earl to let her remain where

where ſhe is, till, from her behaviour there, we can judge more correctly of her character."

Lady Bell was not fond of controverſy, and knew well that her ſiſter's temper was not remarkable for its placidity, ſhe did not therefore deem it prudent to irritate her by oppoſition at the preſent criſis, as ſhe was fearful it might render her ſtill more poſitive in her objections to the reception of Anzoletta at the Hall. She was likewiſe well acquainted with the real motives of her reluctance to accede to the propoſition, viz. her brother might not be inſenſible to the charms of his fair

fair ward on the one hand, and Lady Frances had not ſo far ſubdued the dictates of vanity, or abandoned her ſcheme of conqueſt, and hopes of matrimony, as to induce her to bear without repining the poſſibility of her fortune being diminiſhed by the marriage of her brother, or her projects foiled by the interview of a more attractive object. It was true, indeed, ſhe was ſome years older than the Earl, and, in the common courſe of events, had not much chance to ſurvive him; but ſhe had experienced his tenderneſs, and doubted not, if an eligible match offered, that he would rather add a few thouſands to her portion

than

than ſuffer her to linger out her exiſt-
" ence *pining on the virgin thorn.*"
She had been alſo informed by Mrs.
Trignet, (her woman) that the neigh-
bourhood of Fitz-Vernon Hall, was
not ſo horrible as ſhe firſt had ima-
gined. On the ſide of the Road
leading to the town were two fine
ſeats, both inhabited by ſingle gentle-
men, in other words, old batchelors:
the one a rich Turkey merchant re-
tired from trade, the other a doctor of
divinity, whoſe livings being ſituated
in a bleak northern county, contented
himſelf with viſiting them once a year,
while the care of his flock was com-
mitted to a curate, who having a wife

and

and three ſmall children, was better able to endure the inconveniencies and inclemencies of a mountainous region on a ſtipend of fifty pounds per annum than his patron, who had more temptations to combat from his more elevated and affluent ſituation. The world, indeed, did not ſeem to think that the ſouls of his pariſhioners were any ways endangered by the negligence of their paſtor, and his *good* dinners and *ſnug* whiſt parties were conſequently undiſturbed by unpleaſant reflections, on a ſubject which ſome more zealous divines would probably eſteem a *breach of duty*. There was no danger, Lady Frances thought, that

that a pretty face, with only two thouſand pounds, could poſſibly rival *her* in their eſteem.

But there reſided in an elegant, modern-built houſe, whoſe extenſive gardens joined Lord Fitz-Vernon's park, a gentleman of more promiſing expectations. "A gentleman," ſaid Mrs. Triquet, my Lady, "about thirty, who has been only a few months a widower, keeps three carriages, a pack of harriers, open houſe, and, in ſhort, ſpends his money like a nabob." A man who ſpent his money like a nabob might, Lady Frances thought, be very likely to throw away his heart

on

on that pretty trifle, a beautiful face; and ſhe mentally preferred the character of this gentleman to either the rich Turkey merchant or the pious divine.

There were alſo officers of militia in the town, who gave balls and concerts in the very firſt ſtile, and her Ladyſhip, who was ſecretly reſolved to enjoy the very few comforts which, ſhe ſaid, their melancholy ſituation afforded, felt no ſmall reluctance to uſher with her into public a figure ſo formed to attract admiration as was that of Anzoletta.

The

The objections arising from these prudent considerations were, however, compelled to yield to the positive declarations of the intentions of the Earl to receive his ward into his own house as soon as the last sacred duties should be performed to the obsequies of Polletti; a resolution strengthened by the earnest solicitations of Lady Isabel, who every day returned from her morning visit to Anzoletta more fascinated by the winning simplicity of her manners, and more tenderly interested in her future welfare. Neither was Lord Fitz-Vernon insensible of the indelicacy which his sister intimated there appeared in suffering *his* ward to remain

remain in the houſe of Mr Manly, who, whatever conſequence he might arrogate to himſelf, Lady Iſabell ſtill conſidered as a *ſervant* to her brother.

The envious jealouſy which the kindneſs of the Earl and her Ladyſhip to Anzoletta had inſpired, was too obvious to eſcape her penetration; and the impertinent familiarity of *Tom*, which Miſs Zadoſki found difficult to repreſs, without drawing on her the immediate reſentment of his family, rendered her ſituation extremely irkſome. Meanwhile, ſome arrangements at the Hall, which Lady Bell had contrived for the accommoda-

tion

tion of her young friend, prolonged the neceſſity of her reſidence at Mr. Manly's.

Delighted with the proſpect of obtaining ſo eſtimable a companion in the ſolitude her ill health impoſed on her, her Ladyſhip had exerted her fancy in ornamenting the little ſuite of apartments deſtined for her occupation.

Anzoletta was a proficient in muſic, and a ſmall room, which overlooked a long and fertile valley ſituated at the foot of a hill, that reverbed ſoft and long vibrating echo, was fitted up

for the performance of ſelect concerts. The Earl alſo was an amateur of the ſcience, and played on the violoncello; and entered into Lady Bell's arrangement with apparent pleaſure, ſecretly delighted to obſerve that tranſient emanation of chearfulneſs in his ſiſter, which the execution of a favourite project will frequently excite in a mind rendered habitually languid with the long ſtruggles of reſerved affliction, combating with a lingering and painful diſeaſe.

Meanwhile the ſituation of Anzoletta (to whom the deſigns of the Earl had not yet been announced by her friend

friend Lady Bell, who, from a motive of fond caprice, was preparing for her an agreeable ſurpriſe) became every day leſs ſupportable, from the ſaucy familiarity of young Manly, and the ſarcaſtic congratulation of his ſiſter; who, with inſidious policy, declaimed againſt her frequent correſpondence with Mrs. Brady, the wife of the curate, who was indeed the only female with whom the deceaſed Polletti had ſuffered her to aſſociate.

To this lady, now buried in the obſcurity of a little remote village, had Anzoletta been indebted for much valuable and ſolid inſtruction: her

kindneſs to had cheared many of thoſe melancholy hours of languor and regret which had preceded the death of the Signior. The ſoftneſs of her diſpoſition was congenial to the mind of Anzoletta; and the misfortunes ſhe had endured, without repining for the ſake of a huſband, whom ſhe had eſpouſed contrary to the conſent of a proud and imperious family, excited in the boſom of her young friend the moſt tender ſympathy.

Mrs. Brady was the eldeſt of a large family, who had been, from an imbecility of temper in their father, (tho' otherwiſe poſſeſſed of the moſt ſhining talents)

talents) rather than any unavoidable misfortune, reduced from a ſtate of affluence to one of comparative penury, a ſituation rendered ſtill more comfortleſs, from the haughty character of thoſe more proſperous relatives to whom ſhe looked up for ſupport. To a tolerable portion of natural underſtanding, and perhaps ſome ſmall ſhare of genius, were added all the advantages the care of a tender and indulgent father could beſtow; and if to correct the youthful productions of his daughter ſometimes diverted the deep melancholy which his diſappointments in early life had rendered habitual to him, they contributed

only to increaſe on reflection the chagrin which he felt, when he conſidered that the talents which he cultivated as congenial with his own were apparently doomed to wither in obſcurity, or probably by adding additional poignancy to the deep ſenſe of her hopeleſs ſituation, accelerate the termination of her exiſtence by the lingering pangs of a broken heart. Mrs. Brady, however, wearied of dependence on relations, and diſguſted with the contumelious neglect of her family in her twenty-firſt year, accepted the hand of a lover, whoſe affection for her promiſed at leaſt to ſooth the keen ſenſe ſhe ſtill retained

of

of her paſt diſappointments. Her early youth had been ſpent in exertions for the ſupport of a family, who, after the death of her father, and a ſeries of certain unfortunate events, which once more plunged her with an infant family of her own in all the horrors of poverty, repaid her former cares (cares which had ſtole the gaiety of youthful years from her boſom, and tinctured her ideas even in the ſpring of life with gloomy ſadneſs) with ſlight and indifference. From ſome of theſe connexions, this treatment was additionally painful, from the recollection of the many mortifications ſhe had experienced for their ſakes, and

the unkindneſs of her ſurviving parent (a woman of ſtrong paſſions, and prone to the indulgence of ſtill ſtronger prejudices) towards her huſband, during a period when the hand of affliction preſſed heavy on them, determined her to renounce their ſociety for ever, and ſeclude herſelf with her children in the little village adjoining Fitz-Vernon Hall, where her huſband had at length obtained a curacy, to which little ſtipend he added the emoluments of a ſmall ſchool. Mrs. Brady had beheld with admiration the virtues exemplified in the character of the young ſtranger; ſhe viewed her young, artleſs, and lovely, and on the point of

loſing

loſing her ſole protector: ſhe had alſo penetrated into the deſigns of Tom Manly, and with maternal vigilance endeavoured to ward off from Anzoletta the mortification which the inſolence of his temper, and his ignorance of the rights of humanity, ſeemed preparing for her. This conduct had indeed drawn on her the reſentment of the whole family; and Mr. Manly, in his capacity of ſteward to Lord Fitz-Vernon's eſtates, took care to make Mr. Brady feel the "rod of power," by every ſeverity he was capable of inflicting. He had twice pounded a ſolitary cow, which was the principal ſupport of their young family;

mily; and had once ſeized on their little effects for a quarter's rent, and would doubtleſs have turned them deſtitute on the *wide world*, had not the Signior, who was informed of the circumſtance by his old domeſtic, diſcharged the debt Young truly ſays that

> "Forgiveneſs to the injur'd does belong,
> "For they ne'er pardon who have done you wrong."

And from the moment that his patron had ſpoke of him in terms ſo favourable, on the deceaſe of Polletti, his hatred became implacable. The ſonage too was repairing under the immediate

immediate inſpection of the Earl, a meaſure on which he had not even been conſulted; and the cottage, which had been the reſidence of the Signior, given, with a ſmall penſion, to the old houſekeeper. Poor Anzoletta, whoſe interference he attributed theſe arrangements to, was now regarded by the whole family as a very impertinent perſon, who aſſumed a conſequence unbecoming one in her ſituation, and Miſs Manly really thought that Lady Bell might have ſelected a more eligible companion among her old acquaintance—not that ſhe envied Miſs Zadoſki ſuch a ſituation—no, her papa could do as much for her as many of the 'ſquires daughters

daughters who had married to keep their coaches; but as Mrs. Brady had been invited by Lady Bell to viſit Miſs Zadoſki at the Hall, ſhe thought gratitude ſhould have induced Anzoletta to obtain for them the ſame honor.

The gentle Anzoletta, already depreſſed by her late loſs to a degree of melancholy, liſtened with no ſmall uneaſineſs to theſe converſations, which were inceſſantly repeated and joyfully embraced. The occaſion of quitting this rude and unpoliſhed ſociety for that of her elegant friend at the Hall, The flattering attention ſhewn her by

Lord

Lord Fitz-Vernon, and the unremitting kindneſs of Lady Iſabel, fully compenſated for the coolneſs ſhe could not fail to obſerve in the manners of her noble ſiſter. But as ſhe was much occupied by preparations for an aſſembly at the neighbouring town, at which ſhe was reſolved to be preſent, Anzoletta for the firſt week ſaw little of her Ladyſhip, but at table, when ſhe affected to treat her as a child too young to be referred to on any ſerious topic; and it was with no ſmall diſpleaſure ſhe perceived the deference paid to her opinions by the Earl, who ſtrove, by every mark of eſteem and tenderneſs, to invite her confidence,

and baniſh the reſtraint the peculiarity of her ſituation ſeemed to impoſe on her.

Lord Fitz-Vernon, as before obſerved, was fond of retirement, and the romantic ſituation of the Hall was highly calculated to gratify this predilection. This old Gothic manſion was embolomed in the deep ſhade of a large well wooded Park, and ſheltered from the bleak winds of winter by the umbrageous branches of oaks, "the growth of ages." The gardens too were thickly planted with evergreens, and the ſcarlet berries of the mountain aſh gave them, even at this

dreary

dreary ſeaſon of the year, an appearance of chearfulneſs. Numberleſs were the alterations Lady Frances had planned in the interior of this venerable ſtructure: ſhe would have the poliſhed wainſcotting (which was of walnut) in the grand dining-room painted white, and the gloomy tapeſtry (though the manufacture of the Gobelins, and repreſenting well-choſen and ſtriking paſſages of the Roman hiſtory, which were ſtill in high preſervation) taken down and replaced with light modern papers; the painted windows too were to be exchanged for neat ſaſhes, and the gardens laid out in a ſtile reſembling

thoſe ſhe had ſeen at ſome ſplendid villas on the banks of the Thames.

The Earl would probably have found it no eaſy taſk to reſiſt this intended innovation on the gloomy grandeur he loved, had not her Ladyſhip's ideas been diverted from theſe projects by the new acquaintances ſhe had made at the aſſembly, and in paying and receiving viſits, the winter paſſed tranquilly away.

Meanwhile Anzoletta, whom the Earl had himſelf undertaken to perfect in the Engliſh Language, was making a rapid progreſs in the affections

tions of her noble guardian; an affection of which he was for ſome time hardly conſcious, and he trembled at the diſcovery of ſentiments that ſeemed interdicted by the ſtrict injunctions of the dying Polletti. He recoiled alſo with horror from the recollection of the ſolemn promiſe he had given, and was ſometimes tempted to imagine his only ſafety was in flight; but on what pretence could he again quit his native country, or how leave Anzoletta to the care of Lady Frances, who, notwithſtanding her years, was perpetually employed in ſchemes of conqueſt, and plans of diſſipation, with all the giddy eager-

neſs of a girl of ſeventeen. The ill health alſo of Lady Iſabell was an additional motive of chagrin—the air of Leiceſterſhire did not agree with her; and wearied by long and unremitting ſuffering, ſhe had entered with unuſual avidity into the propoſal of Lady Frances to go to London, where ſhe might have the beſt medical advice.

This project of his ſiſter's gave Lord Fitz-Vernon unſpeakable concern: he had ſometimes flattered himſelf that, at the expiration of the term named by the Signior as deciſive of the fate of his ward, he might find it

it not impoſſible to ripen the ſentiments of gratitude which glowed in the boſom of Anzoletta into love. "But in London," ſaid he, mentally, "ſhe will be ſurrounded by the young, the gay, and the diſſipated, ſhe will liſten to the voice of adulation, and inſenſibly loſe that reliſh for the ſimple pleaſures of ſolitude which it would conſtitute the bliſs of my life to ſhare with her, and ſigh for the elegancies of the *beau monde*; ſhe would probably form new attachments, and perhaps ſelect ſome favoured youth, whoſe years and diſpoſitions were more congenial to her own." Notwithſtanding his ſecret diſlike to the journey, Lord

Fitz-Vernon found himſelf compelled to accede to the plan; for though he would have made no ſcruple to reject an arrangement, calculated only to gratify the vanity and caprice of Lady Frances; yet the ill health of her ſiſter was a plea he could neither with propriety invalidate or oppoſe, and after much debate, he conſented to their departure from the Hall early in the approaching ſpring, though it was obvious that his Lordſhip entered into the neceſſary preparations for their removal, with all the reluctance incident to a mind conſcious of acting in oppoſition to the judgment.

To Anzoletta the propoſed ſcheme appeared to promiſe a tranſcient relief to the anxiety of her preſent ſituation, though her mind was untutored in the ways of mankind, and her education had prevented her from witneſſing the gallantry uſual in the gay world, yet even her ſimplicity could not miſtake the nature of thoſe pointed attentions ſhewn to her by the Earl. She perceived alſo that Lady Frances noticed them with ſecret vexation, nor could all the caution of Anzoletta repreſs theſe proofs of his regard in her Ladyſhip's preſence—accuſtomed to venerate him as her guardian. Though fully ſenſible of his many virtues, there

was ſomething repugnant to her feelings in the idea of accepting him as a lover; yet ſhould the period of time mentioned by the Signior Polletti elapſe in ſilence on the part of her family, and his Lordſhip perſevere in his preſent ſentiments, ſhe knew not how ſhe could conſiſtently refuſe her hand to a man who had with ſuch exalted generoſity protected her hapleſs youth. Change of ſcene, and the company they would probably ſee in London, would, ſhe flattered herſelf, however, divert this attachment, while ſhe ſecretly determined, by ſecluding herſelf in the chamber of her ſick friend, to avoid as much as poſſible

his

his Lordſhip's preſence. But, alas! this tender friend, who doated on Anzoletta, (and frequently declared her air and features perpetually reminded her of one who had in early youth poſſeſſed her tendereſt affections) had obſerved the viſible partiality of Lord Fitz-Vernon for his ward with ſecret delight, and eſteeming her protegee as unequalled in goodneſs and lovelineſs, ardently wiſhed to ſee her united to a brother, whom ſhe looked up to as the beſt of men, and whoſe happineſs ſhe fancied Anzoletta formed to conſtitute, compelled to liſten to plans for future ſcenes of felicity, all of which had a

reference to the ſubject neareſt her heart; even the ſociety of Lady Bell became leſs pleaſing, and ſhe gladly embraced the return of ſpring, which enabled her again to enjoy the ſolitary walks in the vicinity of the Hall; the opening buds of the trees, the lively green of the reviving herbage, together with the ſong of the feathered tenants of the ſhades, formed a pleaſing contraſt to the gloom of the Hall; and Anzoletta found her ſpirits invigorated and her health amended by her daily rambles. She could now alſo viſit her good friend Mrs. Brady without the parade of a carriage, and old Mary the ancient houſekeeper,

who

who had learned from the ſervants at the Hall that her young Lady was much careſſed by the Earl, and would poſſibly in a ſhort time become a counteſs, "which, to be ſure, Miſs," ſaid the venerable domeſtic, "is what you have certainly a right to do."

Anzoletta ſmiled at her ſimplicity, and gaily replied, "that ſhe had not ſufficient ambition to aſpire to ſo exalted a rank; a much more humble ſituation than mine now is," added ſhe, with a ſoftened tone, and ſighing at the recollection of the uncertainty of her origin, "would, perhaps, better become my fortune."

"Not

" Not at all, my dear Miſs," returned Mary, with quickneſs, " why ſhould you not be a counteſs, or baroneſs, or ſome grand thing, like the reſt of your relations."

" And pray, how do you know, Mary, that my family are of the rank you deſcribe," ſaid Anzoletta, in accents which ſhewed how much ſhe was intereſted on the ſubject," " did you ever hear the Signior mention them?"

" Why no, my dear young lady, not abſolutely mention them to *me*," returned Mary; " but when I cleared away the rubbiſh in my maſter's cloſet, which was on the day that my Lord

Lord Fitz-Vernon ſent for his books and papers, I perceived ſeveral pieces of writing on the floor; on ſome of theſe I ſaw written, in a very large hand, "the name of Count Zadoſki, and you know, Miſs, you are called Zadoſki; ſo, thinks I, this count is for certain Miſs's father; ſo then I put on my ſpectacles, and looked again, and I read ſomething about "*unhappy daughter*; and to be ſure, my dear Lady, you are very unhappy not to know who you belong to; but the moſt of them were about ſome foreign parts or other, ſo as I thought *then* you knowed all theſe things, I burnt them with the reſt."

Anzoletta

Anzoletta, after remaining for ſome minutes abſorbed in a melancholy reverie, and bidding Mary be careful how ſhe mentioned theſe circumſtances, and remonſtrating with much earneſtneſs againſt the impropriety of promulgating the reports of the Earl's attachment to herſelf, tenderly preſſed her hand, and bid her adieu.

In her way home, as ſhe paſſed the parſonage, which had now aſſumed the appearance of comfort and convenience, ſhe perceived Mrs. Brady ſeated in the old portico, ſurrounded by her children, to the eldeſt of whom ſhe had been diſpenſing their ſupper, while

while the youngeſt, with all the ſportive graces of infancy, withdrew its roſy lips from the boſom of his mother to ſmile in her face, and play with the green ribbon that tied her ſtraw bonnet. "Happy infants," ſighed Anzoletta, as ſhe kiſſed her white hand *en paſſant* to Mrs. Brady," "happy infants, who experience a father's care, a mother's tenderneſs, while I, unclaimed of any one, ſeem doomed to pine away a tedious exiſtence in anxious uncertainty of my origin, and deprived of all the tender joys of conſanguinity!" As ſhe cloſed this exclamation, ſhe melted into tears, and overcome by the agitation of ſpirits

the

the intelligence of Mary had excited, ſhe threw herſelf on a ſeat beneath the cheſnut trees that ſhaded the great avenue to the Hall. For ſome minutes ſhe continued long in thought, when her attention was diverted by the ſound of horſes feet in the road, and looking up, diſcovered a ſtrange ſervant in the family livery, leading a beautiful grey horſe by the ſide of his own. She pauſed to ruminate to whom theſe might belong, and a ſhort time afterwards a gentleman paſſed her with a look of aſtoniſhment, and bowing reſpectfully, continued his way to the Hall.

The

The moon riſing with mild effulgence from behind the adjacent hills, and darting her feeble radiance between the cloſely interwoven branches of the trees, now warned Anzoletta that it was time to return to the houſe, where ſhe found the ſervants buſily employed in inquiring of the ſtranger, "What was the beſt news in London?" and on her entering the parlour, perceived the gentleman who had paſſed her in the avenue, to whom the Earl introduced her as his ward, and, in return, preſented him to her by the appellation of Captain Paget.—Miſs Zadoſki then recollected to have heard that the

neareſt

neareſt male relation of the Earl was diſtinguiſhed by that name; and on glancing her lovely blue eyes over the figure of the ſtranger, fancied ſhe beheld all the elegance and intelligence of her guardian diſplayed in his fine dark eyes, with the additional graces of agreeable and regular features, and a perſon in which was combined the moſt perfect ſymetry, with the vigour and ſprightlineſs of more youthful years. Nor did Captain Paget appear leſs aſtoniſhed, leſs rivetted to the contemplation of the beautiful form of Anzoletta: the frank gallantry of deportment which had, a few minutes previous to her entrance, excited the approbation

approbation of Lady Frances, (who had not ſeen him for many years) was now changed for an air of thoughtfulneſs; and the ſmile of gaiety that illumined his open countenance, ſoftened into the dejected expreſſion of tender melancholy.

Lord Fitz-Vernon, who delighted on all occaſions to diſplay the perfections of his ward, as ſoon as the ſupper was removed, requeſted her to take her harp, (an inſtrument in which ſhe excelled) and with her accuſtomed readineſs to oblige, Anzoletta complied. Her books lay before her, and Captain Paget, with the politeneſs

natural to him, held the one ſhe had ſelected for her. After performing a leſſon with much taſte and execution, while the Captain gazed on her with equal aſtoniſhment and admiration, "Anzoletta," ſaid the Earl, will you now favour us with a ſong?" She now turned to that charming air of Paſiello's, "For tenderneſs form'd in life's early day;" but had ſcarcely got through the ſecond line, when the reflections that ſaddened her imagination during her evening's walk now recurred in full force to her memory, and overcome by the melancholy ſenſations the plaintive words of her ſong awakened, the inſtrument fell from her

her hand, and hiding her face in her handkerchief, ſhe burſt into a flood of tears. "What is the matter with the child," cried Lady Frances, in a tone of voice not the moſt gentle, "are you ſubject to theſe vapouriſh complaints?" Meanwhile the Earl, in accents of the tendereſt inquiry, endeavoured to tranquillize her ſpirits, and in a few minutes ſucceeded; when Anzoletta, aſhamed of her want of fortitude, and confuſed by the eager gaze of Captain Paget, apologized for her weakneſs, by ſaying, the long walk, to which ſhe had been tempted by the fineneſs of the evening, had fatigued her, and entreated permiſſion to re-

tire. Lord Fitz-Vernon led her to the door of the apartment; and as ſoon as he was re-ſeated, Captain Paget enquired how long his Lordſhip had enjoyed the happineſs of being guardian to ſo lovely a girl?"

"It is now about ſeven or eight months," returned the Earl, coldly, and dropped the diſcourſe.

"Oh, I aſſure you, Paget," ſaid Lady Frances, "her hiſtory is quite romantic, at leaſt the manner of her being introduced to us."

"It grows late," cried the Earl, in a quicker tone than uſual, (at the ſame time directing a frown of diſpleaſure towards his ſiſter) and Paget is no

doubt tired with his journey, another time I will acquaint him with what we know of the ſtory of Miſs Zadoſki."

Lady Frances and the Captain comprehended his meaning; and after converſing for a ſhort time on the topics of the day, retired to their reſpective apartments.

Seldom had the philoſophic mind of Lord Fitz-Vernon experienced ſuch perturbation as at this moment: he had with that quickneſs, inſeparable to love, perceived the ſtriking impreſſion which Anzoletta's appearance had

made on Captain Paget, whose visit, (though the Earl preferred him to all his other male relations, not only on account of his own merit, but as the son of a tenderly esteemed friend) in the present situation of his thoughts, was equally unwelcome and unexpected. Paget was indeed exactly the kind of man from whose observation he would have wished to have secluded his ward: he was now in the twenty-seventh year of his age, well formed, with a countenance glowing with intelligence and health; to manners, gay, easy, and ingenuous; he added a taste for literature, and possessed in an eminent degree the happy talent

talent of nicely accommodating his ſubjects to the taſte and capacity of his auditors. Such a man, in the eyes of a young girl of ſeventeen, was, no doubt, a dangerous foil to his Lordſhip, who, though endowed with a ſtrong and well-cultivated underſtanding, from a habit of deep reflection, and a naturally penſive turn of mind, was accuſtomed to ſpeak little, and always on ſerious topics, and of ſuperior advantages; of Paget the Earl was painfully conſcious. A few months ſince he would hardly have believed it poſſible that the artleſs manners and unobtruſive ſimplicity of Anzoletta could have cauſed ſuch a tumult in a boſom,

which he flattered himſelf was ſteeled by reaſon and philoſophy, againſt any attack of the ſofter paſſions; and he ſaw not any other means of ſecuring the object of his affections (that dear object, with which every idea of future happineſs was connected) than by an immediate declaration of his ſentiments, and entreating her to reſerve her hand and heart for him till the period when ſhe ſhould conceive herſelf free from the dying injunctions of Poletti to beſtow them.

Lord Fitz-Vernon juſtly foreſaw no ſmall oppoſition to theſe views from his ſiſter Lady Frances; but he was already

already ſo wearied with her hauteur, and diſguſted with her abſurd eagerneſs of admiration, which ſhe had diſplayed ſince the death of his uncle, that he no longer felt any repugnance at the idea of her removing from his family. Of Lady Iſabell's acquieſcence with his views he had not the leaſt ſhadow of doubt, and reſolving to acquaint her in the morning with his intentions reſpecting her favourite, his thoughts became more calm, and he ſunk into the friendly arms of ſleep.

As ſoon as Lady Iſabell was acceſſible in the morning, Lord Fitz-Vernon

non paid her a viſit in her dreſſing-room, where her ill health generally confined her till dinner; while Paget, who felt no great inclination to ſacrifice the morning to Lady Frances, ſtrolled out into the fields adjoining the Hall, and attracted by the gay appearance of Mr. Manly's houſe, (which he did not recollect to have noticed during his former viſits to the late Earl) drew near the gate, where the old ſteward was ſtanding, who immediately recognizing the Captain, entreated him to walk in and take ſome refreſhment; and Paget, who flattered himſelf that he might probably gain the intelligence reſpecting

Anzoletta,

Anzoletta, which he ſo anxiouſly wiſhed for, and his noble relative did not ſeem diſpoſed to communicate, readily followed him into the parlour, where the young ladies were ſitting at work.

The pleaſure derived from the appearance of their accompliſhed viſitor, was viſibly depictured in their countenance, each ſtriving, by diſplaying all their attractions, to divert his attention from the other.

After ſome trifling converſation on the change which had taken place in the environs of the Hall ſince his laſt viſit,

viſit, and ſome compliments to Mr Manly on the convenience and neatneſs of his houſe and grounds, and congratulating him on being the father of ſo hopeful a family, Captain Paget obſerved that "he thought the ladies at the Hall peculiarly fortunate in having ſo charming an addition to their ſociety as Miſs Zadoſki."

"Oh, the little Pole, I ſuppoſe you mean (interrupted Mr. Manly) Why that was a very ſtrange affair to be ſure: but my Lord knows beſt," added he, ſhaking his head ſignificantly; "though I cannot but think it was an odd whim of that old Signior to fix himſelf here, juſt as it were on purpoſe

purpoſe to place her in my Lord's family, as if too he had foreſeen when the old Earl would die."

Captain Paget expreſſed his total ignorance of the manner of her introduction to Lord Fitz-Vernon, and Mr. Manly, delighted by his converſation, readily entered into a prolix detail of all he knew concerning her.

"Yes," ſaid Miſs Manly, "and ſhe is treated at the Hall juſt as if ſhe was a relation, and you cannot think how inſufferably proud ſhe is; for though mamma took her in when the old man died, juſt till his Lordſhip had

had determined what to do with her, "she is so ungrateful, that she hardly ever calls on us now. Though perhaps," continued she, with a nod of self-complacency, "there are people, and of great consequence too, who think us every way her equals."

"Nay, Mary," said her father, "I never saw any great pride in her neither; but the girl is pretty, and you know, Sir, (addressing himself with an arch smile to the Captain) that women are seldom apt to allow much praise to superior beauty in another."

"Superior beauty!" repeated Miss Catharine, with a sneer, "I dare say, papa,

papa, that the gentleman, who no doubt ſees the fineſt and handſomeſt ladies in London, does not think Anzoletta any thing extraordinary."

"Indeed, madam!" ſaid Paget, diſguſted with the envy they diſplayed at the favour ſhewn the fair orphan, "I do ſee ſomething very extraordinary in Miſs Zadoſki, an extraordinary aſſemblage of *grace, modeſty, and ſenſibility.*"

The Captain was now riſing to depart, but a ſhower of rain falling, he was perſuaded to reſume his ſeat; and old Manly quitting the room, Miſs Mary obſerved, with an air of myſtery,

myſtery, "That it was a thouſand pities the Earl did not marry; for, as people thought, the greateſt part of his eſtate would probably go out of the family."

"Why no, not wholly out of the family, Mary," replied her ſiſter, laughing, "for there are ſome perſons who do not doubt but his Lordſhip has good reaſon to be ſo fond of her; but if ſhe is his daughter, why not acknowledge her at once."

Captain Paget was about to expreſs his aſtoniſhment at this ſurmiſe, when the fair ſubject of their converſation entered the room, and, with much ſweetneſs,

ſweetneſs, informed Miſs Manly that their departure for London being fixed for the enſuing week, ſhe had embraced the only opportunity ſhe might poſſibly have before her departure to bid them adieu.

The young ladies coloured highly, and, in confuſed accents, returned her civilities; and after leaving her reſpects for Mrs. Manly, who was gone to the town, returned through the park to the Hall, accompanied by Captain Paget.

"And how do you reliſh this ſolitude, my dear madam," ſaid he, look-

ing around him, "theſe wild woods and murmuring water-falls; you muſt ſurely have paſſed a tedious winter?"

"By no means, Sir," replied Anzoletta, "retirement is congenial to my feelings; and the kindneſs of my Lord and Lady Iſabell would render a much more recluſe ſituation pleaſant: beſides, you know, (continued ſhe) Lady Frances has card-parties ſome times."

"Yes," returned Paget, "that is to ſay, ſhe contrives to collect all the antiquated beaux in the vicinity, with two or three good loquacious old maids or prudent matrons, juſt to amuſe her with a little ſcandal or ſo.

But

But ſurely," continued he, "ſhe cannot have the timerity to ſuffer you to be preſent on theſe occaſions. To place the bloom of the opening roſe by the gloom of the forlorn ivy, is certainly very impolitic."

"I really do not comprehend you," returned Anzoletta, gravely, as they entered the houſe; and with an air of diſpleaſure aſcended to her apartment.

Anzoletta felt herſelf hurt at the freedom with which Captain Paget ſpoke of her ſituation. "Alas!" ſighed ſhe, "how few have ſufficient ſenſibility to feel for the diſtreſſes of

their fellow-creatures. How often are the wounds of the afflicted heart wantonly torn open by the thoughtleſs hand of proſperous levity, and the retiring ſigh of unobtruſive ſorrow ſcoffingly echoed by the giddy voice of mirth."

Theſe meditations were now interrupted by a meſſage from Lady Iſabell, requeſting her attendance in her dreſſing-room; where ſhe found her amiable friend with an appearance of animation in her languid features, which at once ſurpriſed and delighted Anzoletta.

"I wiſh to ſpeak to you, my beloved girl," ſaid Lady Iſabell, "on an affair of the utmoſt importance; and I flatter myſelf that it will be as pleaſing to my ſweet friend as to me. Yes, dear Anzoletta, (continued her Ladyſhip, preſſing her hand, while the tear of tenderneſs beamed in her eye) Lord Fitz-Vernon loves you; and the affection I have felt for you, from the firſt moment I ſaw you, will now be confirmed by ſeeing you conſtitute the felicity of the beſt of brothers. I ſee you are ſurpriſed, (added ſhe) perceiving Anzoletta turn pale) but it is not a tyrant, elated by a conſciouſneſs of power, or mean enough to avail him-

ſelf of obligations, that ſeeks your heart; no, it is a lover, ſenſible of your worth, and zealous for your future felicity, that ſeeks, by making you *his own*, to ſhelter you from the frowns of fortune, and raiſe you to a rank equal to your deſerts."

"Ah! think me not inſenſible, not ungrateful, my deareſt Lady," cried Anzoletta, throwing herſelf at her feet, and raiſing her hitherto downcaſt eyes, in which the tears ſhe had with difficulty reſtrained ſtill trembled) if I receive not as I ought the intelligence you have been pleaſed to communicate; but O! let the melancholy incertitude of my fate plead my excuſe

excuſe for refuſing at preſent the honor intended. I have, perhaps, a father, who alone has a right to diſpoſe of me—a father, who I am to believe will one day reclaim his child, and whoſe authority alone can ſanctify to my feelings the nuptial tye."

"I expected ſuch a reply, from the delicacy of your ſentiments," ſaid Lady Bell, preſſing her to her boſom. "I revere the filial affection which prompts this heſitation, on the acceptance of a propoſal ſo highly honorable to you, but it is not, my ſweet girl, till that period ſhall have elapſed, which your late reſpectable protector aſſigned as probable for the appearance of your

parent, that my brother wiſhes to confirm his happineſs by an union with you, nor would he wiſh the woman with whom he ſeeks to enter into the moſt ſolemn engagements to gratify his wiſhes at the expence of her duty."

Anzoletta experienced a freer reſpiration, and a return of that chearful glow which uſually animated her cheek, as Lady Bell pronounced the laſt ſentence; and mentally perſuaded herſelf, that, having no other attachment, ſhe might eaſily (in the length of time which muſt intervene before the celebration of this propoſed marriage)

riage) ſubdue a reluctance, of which ſhe dared no longer examine the cauſe, which ſhe was indeed at that moment perhaps wholly unconſcious; and, therefore, when Lady Bell diſmiſſed her to dreſs for dinner, with the information that, to ſpare her the confuſion of formal overtures on the part of her guardian, ſhe would take upon herſelf to inform him of the reception his propoſals had met with, ſhe retired to her chamber, with a chearfulneſs that induced her noble patroneſs to believe that Anzoletta was perfectly well ſatisfied with the intended union.

Meanwhile

Meanwhile Captain Paget, who readily adopted the idea furniſhed by Miſs Manly, that the reputed orphan was really the daughter of Lord Fitz-Vernon, ſcrupled not to indulge the growing partiality he felt for her—an opinion which was confirmed by the reſerve which the Earl affected on the ſubject of her introduction to his family. The character indeed of his Lordſhip ſeemed rather to militate againſt this ſuſpicion, being remarkable for ſtrict probity, and a ſcrupulous diſcharge of his moral duties: but Paget was eaſily led to believe what he wiſhed, for it would have been unreaſonable to ſuppoſe the Earl would

would refuſe the hand of his daughter to the man whom he had induced to believe he ſhould, if he died in a ſtate of celibacy, conſtitute his ~~air~~ heir.

When therefore Anzoletta deſcended to dinner, Lord Fitz-Vernon, who had received from his ſiſter an account of their conference, with which he was well ſatisfied, contented himſelf with tenderly preſſing the hand of his fair ward; and during the remainder of the day, only diſplayed towards her his uſual polite attention. In truth, though he was become a ſlave to the *paſſion*, nothing could have been more awkward to Lord Fitz-Vernon

Vernon than the idea of what is called *making love*; and his Lordſhip was extremely well pleaſed to be ſpared the perplexities of expreſſing his attachment with that tender eloquence, that youthful energy, which young ladies of ſeventeen are ſometimes apt to expect; nor was Anzoletta leſs delighted on her ſide that the conſideration and addreſs of Lady Bell had prevented her being expoſed to the embarraſſment ſuch a declaration from the Earl himſelf would have indubitably excited.

On the ſpecious brow of Lady Frances, it was true, were plainly viſible

ble the traces of chagrin and diſpleaſure; but theſe ſentiments her brother (who had, in the unſuſpecting fullneſs of his heart, hinted to her Ladyſhip his deſigns in favor of the orphan) had meliorated, by propoſing that a ball ſhould be given to the neighbouring families previous to their removal from the Hall, and the preparations neceſſary for this feſtival in a great meaſure diverted her ill humour.

The following Monday evening was appointed for its celebration; and Captain Paget, whoſe natural vivacity prompted him to enter with avidity into

into the ſcheme, had undertaken to aſſemble the company, and entreated Lady Frances to ſuffer the young Manlys to be of the party, "as added he) we ſhall want them to make up the ſett." And the young ladies, who ſecretly attributed this favor to motives of latent partiality in the breaſt of the "*charming Captain*," exerted all their ſkill in the article of dreſs on the occaſion.

Anzoletta, too, felt, for the firſt time, an ambition to excel in the elegance of her appearance: her youthful companion, Captain Paget, ſhe fancied, had aſſumed a more reſpectful

deportment towards her. He ſpoke in terms of the warmeſt approbation of the virtues of Lady Bell, (a theme to which ſhe could have liſtened for ever) and entered into all her little purſuits and amuſements with that inſinuating ſweetneſs of manner ſo peculiarly his own, while the gentle, unſuſpecting Anzoletta, concluding that Lord Fitz-Vernon would be rather gratified than diſpleaſed by her attention to his favorite kinſman, liſtened, without conſtraint, to that language, of all others the moſt likely imperceptibly to inſpire affection in an ingenuous heart—the language of unaffected ſympathy and eſteem.

At

At length the joyous evening arrived, and the gay groupe aſſembled; among whom ſhone conſpicuous in finery the Miſs Manlys.

As ſoon as the tea and coffee had been ſerved, the muſic ſummoned the votaries of Terpſichore to the dance. Minuets were not propoſed, and Lady Frances, who doubted not but *etiquette* would have prompted Paget to offer his hand to her Ladyſhip, advanced, with no very great complacency in her countenance, to the top of the ſett with Mr. Ziſland, the gay widower, for her partner, while Paget, with an hilarity in his features, which nothing could

could equal but the ſmiles of gaiety which illumined the beautiful face of Anzoletta, led her to the lower end of the room, with her hand tenderly claſped in his; for Lord Fitz-Vernon, who had too much gravity to join the "*feſtive throng*" of dancers, had judged it moſt reſpectful to his intended bride to beſtow her for the evening on his accompliſhed kinſman,—a favour which, conceiving her to be the daughter of the Earl, Paget had miſconſtrued, and applied to the motives which his own ardent hopes ſuggeſted.

Lady Frances, however, had too much penetration to ſuffer the viſible

pleaſure that beamed in the expreſſive eyes of her couſin to paſs unnoticed; and when, after the two firſt dances, a change of partners was propoſed, and Anzoletta declining dancing any more, ſeated herſelf by the ſide of Lady Iſabell, while Paget leaned over the back of her chair, and entered into a ſprightly and intereſting converſation. Her Ladyſhip advanced towards the Earl, who had juſt quitted the card-room, and ſaid, with a ſarcaſtic ſmile on her countenance, "do you ſee, my dear wife brother, how well your fair intended ſeems to be entertained by the Captain there."—Lord Fitz-Vernon leaned his eyes towards them,

and

and beheld at that moment the white hand of Anzoletta drop from that of Paget, who had kiſſed it with an air of gallantry, that forced the Earl to draw ſome certain compariſon between the youthful elegance of perſon and manners that diſtinguiſhed his couſin and his own, which, conſidering them as rivals in the regards of a young lady of ſeventeen, were certainly not much in favour of himſelf; and his Lordſhip, vexed by the ill-natured triumph diſplayed in the air of Lady Frances, though ſecretly anxious to interrupt a converſation which he fancied (and perhaps not unjuſtly) was inimical to his intereſt in the boſom of Anzo-

letta, yet fearful of betraying the jealouſy that rankled in his own, he turned penſively away, and walked to the lower end of the room, where Miſs Manly and the daughter of the rector were in earneſt converſation.

"But ſurely, my dear Manly," ſaid the latter, "Lord Fitz-Vernon will never conſent to the marriage of his heir with a girl whom nobody knows, and who has nothing, I ſuppoſe, but a pretty face to recommend her: the idea is really abſurd, and you muſt pardon me if I think your tenderneſs for the handſome Paget has exaggerated

rated his attachments to the little Pole.

Lord Fitz-Vernon, who had liſtened with no ſmall uneaſineſs to the beginning of their converſation, could now hardly forbear ſmiling at the mention of Miſs Manly's *tenderneſs* for his couſin; for ſo grave a man as the Earl could hardly be imagined to ſuppoſe that the caſual viſit of Captain Paget at Mr. Manly's had given birth to this *exquiſite tenderneſs* towards him in the fair boſom of the ſteward's daughter, or that ſhe had entertained her companion with a long detail of hopes and fears, which his Lordſhip won-

dered ſhould exiſt in her fancy. He had not, however, ſufficient philoſophy to reflect with indifference on the ridicule with which Miſs Herbert had treated the idea of his couſin's marriage with Anzoletta; though had Lord Fitz-Vernon been as well verſed in the manners of the world as with his books, he would eaſily have conſoled himſelf in the knowledge that all thoſe ſarcaſms, which envy of her ſuperior merit levelled at the little Pole, would be changed into panegyric on Anzoletta, when ſhe appeared as the Counteſs Fitz-Vernon.

As

As ſoon as the company retired, and Miſs Zadoſki and Paget had quitted the ſupper-room, "Lady Frances," ſaid the Earl to his ſiſter, who was playing with her fan in a thoughtful attitude, "how does your Ladyſhip think my couſin Paget will receive the news of my intended marriage; for, poor fellow! I have given him reaſon to ſuppoſe I ſhould, if I ſurvived my uncle, make him my heir: his father was my deareſt friend, and how well I loved his mother—a life of celibacy till theſe years beſt ſpeaks?"

"I do not know," ſaid Lady Frances, "what he thinks of it; though

though he will probably imagine, I ſuppoſe, that it would be a wiſer thing in your Lordſhip to give the girl to him; and it is pretty clear to me that Anzoletta is already of that opinion.

"Heaven forbid!" replied the Earl, "I ſhould be ſorry to make her unhappy; but to reſign her even to him, (added his Lordſhip, after a momentary pauſe) is a ſacrifice I feel I *cannot* make." He then abruptly quitted the apartment, leaving Lady Frances highly aſtoniſhed at ſeeing all the powers of reaſon and philoſophy put to flight by the ſimple charms of an obſcure and unexperienced girl.

On

On the following morning, when Anzoletta proceeded to the chamber of Lady Bell, (on her return from a ſtroll in the park with Paget) the glow of health and pleaſure which animated her fine features was ſomething leſſened by her imagining ſhe ſaw a gloom overcaſt thoſe of her kind friend.

Lord Fitz-Vernon had already viſited his ſiſter, and confided to her the uneaſineſs occaſioned to him from the reciprocal attachment which appeared between Captain Paget and his beloved ward; and Lady Bell, who had alſo noticed what indeed was very viſible to all who ſaw them, began now, in the

the gentleſt terms, to point out to Anzoletta the impropriety of encouraging ſuch ſentiments for any other man than the Earl, to whom ſhe ought to conſider herſelf as irrecoverably engaged. "I do not wonder, my dear girl," ſaid her Ladyſhip, "that the amiable gaiety of our young couſin ſhould attract your eſteem; but remember, that by inſpiring him with a paſſion, you can never be reaſonably allowed to return: you can only involve him in the moſt complicated miſery; for Paget has very little beſides his half-pay to ſubſiſt on, and his rank has been long ſupported by the munificence of my brother."

For

"For heaven's ſake, my deareſt Lady, ſay no more on this cruel ſubject," cried the weeping Anzoletta," "I involve Paget in miſery, and rob his youth of the brilliant proſpects Lord Fitz-Vernon's favor ſeems to promiſe! I encourage a paſſion criminal in myſelf, and hopeleſs for him! Oh, the idea is inſupportable! Rather, my dear madam, (continued ſhe, in a voice half ſuffocated by the violence of her emotions) rather let me be permitted to retire from a family, where I have unhappily become the cauſe of anxiety and regret to thoſe whom I venerate, whom I fondly love; an humbler ſituation would much better

ſuit

ſuit my myſterious fortune, and the Earl in my abſence will ſoon forget the partiality he has ſo unworthily honored me with."

"And the beſt thing the Earl could do," ſaid Lady Frances, who now entered the room, and had liſtened to the laſt ſentence—"a prétty confuſion here is about *nobody knows who*. But give me leave to obſerve, Miſs Zadoſki, (ſternly addreſſing herſelf to the trembling girl) that affected humility will not deceive me, though I have no doubt a retreat from the family of your guardian may be very deſirable. Paget has a ſpirit of adventure almoſt as romantic as your own,

own, and has, no doubt, aſſiſted you in the formation of a plan which would exempt you from the reſtraint of thoſe friends, whoſe judgment being a little riper than yours, ſeek to ſave you both from the unhappy conſequences of yielding up your reaſon to the childiſh hopes of a blind and ill-aſſorted union."

"You are a little too harſh, I think, my dear Frances," ſaid the compaſſionate Lady Bell; "Anzoletta has, I am ſure, too grateful a ſenſe of the kindneſs ſhe has received, ſeriouſly to ſeek to throw off the protection and authority of her guardian, and too much good ſenſe to wiſh to delude herſelf

herſelf or Paget into a marriage which muſt ultimately render both of them miſerable. "Go, my love, (continued her Ladyſhip) go to your chamber, and endeavour to reflect calmly on what has been ſaid to you, and let me ſee you at dinner more compoſed."

Poor Anzoletta kiſſed the hand of her friend, which her tears fell faſt on, and retired in ſilence to her apartment, where, throwing herſelf into a chair, ſhe indulged, in all the luxury of tears, the grief with which her innocent heart was ſo fully fraught. Her imagination now recoiled with horror from the

the idea of eſpouſing Lord Fitz-Vernon, whoſe conduct in this affair ſhe could not help regarding as ſelfiſh and tyrannical. She had never conſidered herſelf as deſtitute, though dependent; and a ſpark of ambition, which the inſinuation of old Mary had kindled, now came to her aſſiſtance, and prompted her to repel with ſcorn the contumely of the haughty Lady Frances. On Paget too ſhe reflected; but it was with tenderneſs; he had, in the courſe of their morning ramble, drawn from her the little hiſtory of her life, together with the hopes given her by the Signior that ſhe might one day be acknowledged by her father.

"And, Oh! ſhould this dear father reclaim me," ſaid ſhe, "how happy ſhall I be."—"You do not then feel yourſelf at eaſe in your preſent ſituation," replied Paget, "yet the Earl is very fond of you, as is alſo Lady Bell."—They are both goodneſs itſelf," ſaid Anzoletta, with a deep ſigh; but it is natural to wiſh for the protection of a parent, who, though I am unconſcious of having ever ſeen, I have been invariably taught to revere and reſpect."—Paget now walked thoughtfully by her ſide: he was grieved to be undeceived in the opinion he had formed, that ſhe was the daughter of the Earl; for with this intelligence came alſo the

full

full conviction, that the tenderneſs ſo ſtrongly diſplayed by Lord Fitz-Vernon towards his ward, was the reſult of ſentiments ardent and ſincere as thoſe which he had imperceptibly to himſelf ſuffered to gain an aſcendency in his heart. It was, however, a point too delicate to mention to Anzoletta; and he ſecretly determined to declare the affection he had conceived for her to his noble couſin, and learn from him the probability of its ſucceſs, for he dreaded his power as her guardian, much more than he regretted the poſſibility that by marrying her contrary to the conſent of Lord Fitz-Vernon he might forfeit

liberal allowance he hitherto had received from his generoſity.—Captain Paget was too well acquainted with the female world to remain ignorant of the partiality the young and artleſs Anzoletta had conceived for him: a ſtranger to diſſimulation, and unconſcious of the ſentiments he had inſpired her with, ſhe neither ſtrove to repreſs or conceal her attachment to him; and Paget, who really had that ſpark of Romance in his diſpoſition which Lady Frances had reproached him with, fondly imagined, that with his pay, and the little fortune of his lovely miſtreſs, they might contrive to live very comfortably in retirement.

ment. And as he was too ſanguine to pay any regard to the injunctions of Polletti not to marry for two years, ſo he had no apprehenſions of an oppoſition on the part of her father, (if indeed he ſtill exiſted) as he flattered himſelf he ſhould be able to prevail on the tender Anzoletta to beſtow herſelf on him long before the expiration of that period. Nor had Anzoletta ſuffered theſe deluſive proſpects of ideal felicity to make leſs impreſſion on her youthful mind; and though ſhe was mortified at the contemptuous manner in which Lady Frances ſeemed to behold her, ſhe felt a native, a conſcious ſupport; and ſhe deſcen-

ded to dinner, with a compoſure which was rather the reſult of this ſecret impulſe than either of reaſon or reflection. She however reſolved, if poſſible, to behave with more circumſpection towards Paget, leſt ſhe ſhould prove the innocent occaſion of drawing on him the diſpleaſure of the Earl; though with a firmneſs, unuſual to a girl of her tender age, ſhe reſolutely determined to refuſe his offered hand; and if her father did not appear at the expiration of the period aſſigned, to quit the family, and reſide on the intereſt of her little property with her friend Mrs. Brady.

Lady

Lady Frances alſo, mollified by the repreſentations of her ſiſter, who affirmed that ſhe ought not to reſent a conduct which her childiſh years, and the attractions of their couſin conſidered, was not in itſelf ſo ſtrictly blameable, condeſcended, as ſhe officiated at the head of the table, to pay unuſual attention to her; and Anzoletta endeavoured to believe that ſhe ought to ſacrifice much to friends ſo generous. But when ſhe ventured for a moment to raiſe her down-caſt eyes to Paget, ſhe perceived ſuch an expreſſion of melancholy and diſappointment in his countenance, as at once defeated all theſe prudent re-

ſolves, and left her mind a prey to inexpreſſible anxiety.

Captain Paget, with the ſanguine hopes and impatience of a lover, had loſt no time in executing the determination he had formed to acquaint Lord Fitz-Vernon with his paſſion for Anzoletta; and though the Earl had not, with his uſual candour, informed him of the addreſſes he had himſelf made to her, he coldly adviſed him to relinquiſh a purſuit which might involve him in many difficulties, and concluded that Miſs Zadoſki was not at his diſpoſal. He then obſerved, that he thought it was a pity that Captain

Captain Paget ſhould longer neglect the chance of promotion which now offered by joining the army on the Continent; and aſſuring him, if he ſhould, on reflection, think proper to go abroad, his purſe and intereſt ſhould be equally at his ſervice.

Although Lord Fitz-Vernon imagined that he had conducted this interview with ſufficient addreſs to preclude any ſuſpicion on the part of his couſin of the real motives which prompted him to wiſh his abſence, yet Paget, with much facility, penetrated into his deſigns; and though he did not judge it prudent to irritate

further the jealouſy of his noble relative, by totally refuſing the aſſiſtance he had proffered, he could not ſo far diſſimulate as to promiſe his concurrence with the meaſure he had propoſed: he therefore entreated time to conſider on the mode of conduct the Earl had recommended, and retired to dreſs.

Fortunately for the diſappointed lovers, the following morning was appointed for their departure from the Hall, and the Earl and his ſiſters were too much occupied in preparations for their journey, to have leiſure to notice the grief and agitation which appeared

appeared in their countenances and manners; and Lady Bell, who juſtly conſidered that a *tête-à-tête* could only tend to increaſe rather than reconcile them to their mutual diſappointment, prudently contrived to employ Anzoletta in trifling arrangements about herſelf during the whole evening. There were moments, indeed, when this tender friend ſecretly repined at the engagement ſhe had contributed to form between Lord Fitz-Vernon and his fair ward; ſhe poſſeſſed too much candor to be blind to the inequality of their years and diſpoſitions, and vainly wiſhed that her brother might yet become ſenſible

of

of the cruelty of tearing her from the arms of a man who, by nature and fortune, ſeemed calculated to render her happy; yet having experienced herſelf the pangs of diſappointed paſſion, and even now languiſhed under complaints which had originated in this ſource of mental anxiety, ſhe could not aſſume ſufficient fortitude to remonſtrate with the Earl on the folly of forming an union to which the heart of Anzoletta was not more than reluctant: her affections were alienated, and ſhe would too, probably, inſtead of looking up to him as a huſband deſerving and poſſeſſing all her eſteem, regard him as a ſelfiſh tyrant,

tyrant, who, to gratify an Inclination ill ſuited to his years and character, availed himſelf of his power, and embittered every hour of her future exiſtence. The principles of Anzoletta ſhe had indeed reaſon to believe were thoſe of virtue and religion; but how might theſe ſuſtain a mind ſo young, ſo artleſs againſt the ſnares of duplicity, the arts of ſeduction, and the diſſipation of the gay world, into which ſhe would be but too likely to emerge, to avoid the pangs of reflection, and the retroſpection of her loſt happineſs: this painful train of ideas haunted her Ladyſhip's imagination, and prevented her from repoſing during

ring the night. And when they met at the breakfaſt-table, the dejected Anzoletta had the additional affliction of ſeeing her beſt, her ſincereſt friend, evidently altered for the worſe.

Their journey to town, on account of Lady Bell's weakneſs, was ſlow and tedious. Paget, it was true, occupied a ſeat in the carriage, but prudence compelled him to aſſume a reſtraint extremely irkſome, while the keen eye of Lady Frances inceſſantly glanced from him to Anzoletta, whoſe pallid cheek and languid air ſufficiently expreſſed the ſorrow ſhe laboured under.

The

The ſatisfaction which her Ladyſhip, however, felt on approaching that ſcene of gaiety for which her heart had ſo long panted, prevented her from adding to their diſtreſs, by her uſual acrimony of expreſſion; and when they arrived at the houſe in Brook-ſtreet, which had been prepared for them, ſhe kindly obſerved to Paget, that it was too late for him to return to his lodgings that evening, and entreated him to accept an apartment at the Earl's.

Paget now imagined that his attachment to Anzoletta might poſſibly appear leſs cenſurable in the eyes of Lady Frances

Frances than he had hitherto apprehended; and he retired to reſt, cheared and conſoled by the hope that he might in time induce her to befriend his paſſion: nor was this notion ſo really erroneous as the late conduct of Lady Frances might ſeem to make it appear. With her Ladyſhip's pride and tenacious love of ſuperiority Paget was well acquainted; and he juſtly concluded that ſhe could not cordially concur in a meaſure which would place the orphan, whom ſhe had always affected to contemn for her inſignificance, in a rank ſo far elevated beyond her own pretenſions, however ſanguine theſe might be. Her fortune

tune was alſo very moderate; and the Earl, in looking forward to the poſſibility of a young family of his own, would probably eſteem it imprudent or unneceſſary to diminiſh the property which would deſcend to them in favor of his ſiſter, even ſhould an offer worthy her acceptance occur.

The following day was ſpent in ſhopping, and, with an ill-natured vigilance, Lady Frances carefully prevented a private interview between him and Anzoletta, by taking her out with her; and as Lord Fitz-Vernon did not appear anxious for his longer

ſtay

ſtay with them, he found himſelf compelled to return to his own lodging.

The very languid ſtate of Lady Bell's health, which was viſibly impaired by the journey, and the unfavorable opinions of the phyſicians, whom ſhe conſulted, rendered parties at home improper; and though Lady Frances had renewed her intimacy with ſeveral of her town acquaintance, and went much into public, yet ſhe did not chuſe to be attended on theſe occaſions by the young and blooming ward of her brother, who, on his ſide, was perfectly contented to ſeclude her from the obſervations of the beaux who

who frequented the polite circles in which Lady Frances viſited.

A long and melancholy fortnight elapſed; during which Anzoletta was generally confined to the chamber of her ſick friend, where, though Paget was ſometimes admitted to enquire after her health, he had no opportunity of ſpeaking alone to Anzoletta, whoſe altered countenance gave him inexpreſſible concern; and alarmed by the languor and paleneſs which had taken place of the animated health which had ſo lately lighted up her features, he fondly ventured to obſerve to the Earl the viſible alteration he

perceived in his ward, and added that he was fearful ſhe ſuffered from the confinement ſhe had lately impoſed upon herſelf.

Lord Fitz-Vernon could not help acquieſcing on the ſubject of his fears: and a few nights after (when Lady Bell ſeemed to experience a temporary ſuſpenſion of her malady, which was now become more acute, and even eſteemed dangerous) propoſed their making a party to the opera with ſome friends of Lady Frances. Here the fondneſs for muſic, which Anzoletta entertained was richly gratified, and with Paget by her ſide, ſhe ſeemed

almoſt

almoſt to have regained her wonted tranquillity, had ſhe not experienced a kind of painful confuſion from the rude and ardent gaze of two ſtrangers who were ſeated in the next box, and appeared to be foreigners. The elder, who was far advanced in years, ſeemed to regard her with a ſtern and fierce aſpect; and Anzoletta, when ſhe dared to look towards him, trembled involuntarily at the ferocity which gleamed in his large black eyes. The other, though not ſo auſtere in his aſpect, however, appeared to regard her with equal intereſt; and when Lady Frances, reaching acroſs her brother, preſented a book of the

opera, and addreſſed her by the application of Miſs Zadoſki, Captain Paget, whoſe attention had alſo been arreſted by the uncommon obſervation of the ſtrangers, perceived them both turn pale; and after whiſpering each other, and looking earneſtly at Lord Fitz-Vernon and himſelf, quit the box: however ſurpriſed they might be at a demeanor ſo ſtrange, they neither of them ſuffered it to make any impreſſion on their minds during the remainder of the performance, and the occurrence was for the preſent wholly forgotten in the alarm excited by the report of the ſervant who attended the carriage, "that

Lady

Lady Iſabell had been ſeized with ſtrong convulſions, and was judged by the phyſicians, who had been ſummoned, paſt hope."—Anzoletta, who ſincerely loved her, was too much abſorbed in grief to notice the ſpectators round her; but Paget again obſerved the ſtrangers, regarding them with a look of eager curioſity; and on hearing Lord Fitz-Vernon's carriage loudly and repeatedly commanded to draw up, preſſed forward, and diſappeared among the crowd.

On their arrival at home, they received from the afflicted attendant of Lady Iſabell the melancholy intel-

ligence that ſhe was no more: the affliction of her family may be much eaſier conceived than deſcribed on this unexpected loſs; nor was the grief of Anzoletta leſs ſevere and poignant. She had now loſt all that rendered her ſituation tolerable: the kind and ſympathizing friend, whoſe gentle manners, ſo congenial to her own, had ſoothed the painful incertitude of her fate, and ſheltered her from the malevolence of the envious Lady Frances. A ſlow nervous fever, which confined her three weeks to her chamber, was the conſequence of her mental inquietude. During which period, the anxiety of Paget was become almoſt inſup-

inſupportable: he perplexed the Earl by the viſible diſtraction his apprehenſions had inſpired, and wearied Lady Frances and the phyſicians, by inceſſant inquiries concerning her. At length, however, the natural goodneſs of her conſtitution appeared ſucceſsfully to have combated the moſt alarming ſymptoms, and Paget had once more the happineſs of beholding her recovered from the delirium which had attended the criſis of the diſeaſe, and languiſhing under no other ſufferings than its conſequent weakneſs, for which Dr. L. preſcribed little elſe than a generous regimen, air, and exerciſe.

Lady Frances had now ſurmounted her grief for the loſs of her ſiſter, whoſe property, as ſhe died inteſtate, being wholly perſonal, devolved to her and the Earl; the latter of whom generouſly provided for her domeſtics, and retained her woman (Miſs Hewit) who was remarkable for her fidelity and propriety of conduct, as an attendant on Anzoletta, on whom Lady Frances, in the *firſt hours of her grief*, beſtowed moſt of her jewels and trinkets. She was pleaſed, indeed, to find her ſiſter had omitted to make a will, as ſhe did not doubt but ſhe would, in that caſe, have liberally provided for her young favorite; and willing

willing to avail herſelf of thoſe advantages, which ſhe conceived her increaſe of fortune gave her, propoſed to her brother to paſs the remainder of the ſummer at ſome faſhionable watering-place, a meaſure which he acceded to, in hopes that change of air and variety of ſcene would prove ſerviceable to Anzoletta.

Paget, in whoſe ſociety ſhe alone aſſumed an appearance of chearfulneſs, was alſo invited to accompany them; for though the Earl had not ſufficient fortitude to relinquiſh his pretenſions to his fair ward, and obſerved, with jealous apprehenſion, the auſpicious

auſpicious effect on her ſpirits this arrangement had produced, neither had he ſufficient reſolution to witneſs the chagrin his remonſtrances on the ſubject of her attachment to him would have occaſioned; and while they did not openly appear to cheriſh hopes of ſurmounting the exiſting obſtacles to their union, he contented himſelf with leaving to time the change he flattered himſelf might ſtill be effected in the gentle mind of Anzoletta.

It was judged, however, improper to appear in any place ſo public as Brighton or Margate were at this ſeaſon

ſeaſon; and after much diſcuſſion, and no ſmall reluctance on the part of Lady Frances, the little village of Matlock, in Derbyſhire, was fixed on for their ſummer reſidence.

A few days previous to their intended excuſion, a billet was preſented to Anzoletta, intimating, "that if ſhe wiſhed to hear news of a family much intereſted in her welfare, and who could give her accounts of her father, ſhe need only to take the trouble to accompany the bearer."

Anzoletta had too much diſcretion to determine on truſting herſelf with a ſtranger

a ſtranger without conſulting Lord Fitz Vernon or Lady Frances, (both of whom were abſent) and was proceeding to inform the young man who brought it, that ſhe would take an early opportunity of waiting on the party who had written to her, if he would inform her of their name and addreſs; but on looking again at the note, ſhe perceived it was ſealed with the arms of Polletti, (who had given her a ring with the ſame impreſſion) and repeatedly told her they were the arms of her family. "Oh! it is ſurely my father," ſaid ſhe, mentally, "and ſhall I delay a moment to throw myſelf at his feet, to expreſs my

my joy at his return, to tell him how long my heart has panted for this bleſſed moment, when I ſhall be folded to the boſom of a parent. She then haſtily ran up ſtairs, put on her cloak, and leaving the billet on the table in the drawing-room as an excuſe for her abſence, accompanied the meſſenger, whom ſhe deſired to call a coach, (which he mounted behind) and implicitly truſting to his directions, took the road to Hammerſmith, with a heart palpitating with hope and expectation.

The evening was nearly expired, and Miſs Zadoſki was ſtill abſent; when

when the Earl and his ſiſter returned, accompanied by Paget, and who, as well as Lord Fitz-Vernon, were ſeriouſly alarmed by the abſence of Anzoletta; and doubtful of the conſequences that might attend her acquieſcence with the requeſt the myſterious note contained, while Lady Frances was loud in her cenſure of her indiſcretion: and an hour elapſed in painful conjectures, when Paget, whoſe impatience hardly knew any bounds, began to exclaim, "that he was undone, and Anzoletta loſt for ever, in a voice of diſtraction and deſpondence, which made Lord Fitz-Vernon tremble; and throwing off all reſtraint,

acted ſo many extravagancies, that it was with difficulty that they prevented him from ruſhing like a maniac into the ſtreet, though he knew not whither to direct his ſearch; and he had actually deſcended the ſtairs, followed by the Earl and Lady Frances, when his progreſs was impeded by a ſtranger, who, wildly ruſhing through the Hall, advanced to Lord Fitz-Vernon, eagerly exclaiming, "Where is my child, my long-loſt darling! where is my Anzoletta?"

"Beauchamp, or my memory deceives me," replied Lord Fitz-Vernon, extending his arms to embrace him,

him, "my friend, my dear Beauchamp!"

"Yes, 'tis Beauchamp, indeed," replied the ſtranger, "but tell me, dear Fitz-Vernon, where is my daughter, my Anzoletta, *the adored child of a murdered mother*? her, for whom alone exiſtence has been ſupportable—her, for whom I have braved the torrid climes of India, the parched deſerts of Arabia, and the miſeries of ſlavery: but why do you heſitate—you turn pale. Anſwer me," continued he, ſternly; then in a milder tone, exclaimed, "yes, ſhe is dead, I know ſhe is;" and throwing himſelf with violence

violence on the ground, burſt into a paſſion of tears.

Fitz-Vernon, aſſiſted by Paget, tenderly raiſed him in his arms, and aſſuring him that Anzoletta lived, ſoothed him to ſome degree of compoſure; and at length prevailed on him to aſcend to the drawing-room, where, after forcing him to ſwallow a little wine, the Earl, with much emotion, recapitulated the manner of her introduction to him, and the death of Polletti; (at which Beauchamp wept bitterly) and enlarging on the beauties and merit of Anzoletta, retraced (with the reſervation of his own paſ-

ſion for her) every circumſtance that he conceived might be intereſting to her father; till the hour when ſhe quitted his houſe, and preſenting the note to Mr. Beauchamp, added, "But your billet has probably miſled her; and when ſhe finds you are not at the place to which ſhe has accompanied your ſervant, however late, ſhe will return.

"My billet!" repeated Beauchamp, in an agony, "my billet!" and caſting his eyes over the paper again, elapſed into a tranſient frenzy; "no, 'tis the writing of Zadoſki," cried he, and my child is murdered. Yes, Anzoletta, they have at length ſhed thine innocent

innocent blood, on which their revenge has ſet ſo high a price, and I have only to end in deſpair that exiſtence which has ſo fruitleſsly been ſpent in toil for thy preſervation, and to procure the means to add ſplendor and happineſs to thine." Again tears relieved his overcharged boſom, and he ſunk into a kind of ſtupor.

But Paget, who had till now preſerved ſome appearance of comfort, wildly ſhrieked, "Murdered! a price ſet on her blood! Anzoletta murdered! But who (continued he, apparently making an effort to collect his diſordered faculties) who is this Zadoſki?"

" A villain! a traitor! a murderer! (replied Beauchamp, riſing from his ſeat, and his eyes glowing with fury) But come, ſince you are intereſted in the fate of my child, let us ſeek him, let me meet once more *arm to arm* the hoary aſſaſſin, and ſatiate my revenge with his blood." Beauchamp ſtaggered acroſs the room as he ſpoke, and nature again, exhauſted by a conflict ſo ſevere, ſunk into ſilence, in a ſtate of inſenſibility. He was conveyed to bed, and a ſurgeon ſent for, who having learnt that mental agitation had reduced him to his preſent condition, bled him; and perceiving his recollection to return, after adminiſtering

miniſtering a compoſing draught, and commanded him to be kept quiet, retired.

Meanwhile the united perſuaſions of the Earl and Lady Frances had ſucceeded in reſtoring ſome degree of reaſon to the wretched Paget, who was at length reluctantly perſuaded to go to bed, with a promiſe that two truſty ſervants ſhould be appointed to attend him in the morning in ſearch of Anzoletta, who the Earl imagined muſt be ſtill concealed near town. In a country, whoſe laws are the ſecurity of the lives and properties of the ſubject, he did not believe a crime ſo atro-

cious as the murder of an innocent female would be attempted; and he flattered himſelf that active and vigilant exertions might ſtill prevent her being carried to a foreign country—a meaſure which he judiciouſly endeavoured to prevent, by diſpatching, late as it was, meſſengers to all the principal ports in the kingdom, while he himſelf, early in the morning, waited on the Chancellor, and a certain eminent judge, from whom he procured an habeas corpus, to produce the unhappy and ſtolen ward.

On his return from this expedition, he had the ſatisfaction of finding Mr. Beauchamp

Beauchamp more compoſed and rational: his grief was indeed deep and exquiſite; but a little cool conſideration induced him to hope that Zadoſki, whoſe fortunes were now ruined, and himſelf an exile, would hardly attempt the perpetration of a crime ſo atrocious as his diſordered fancy the preceding evening had ſuggeſted; and he flattered himſelf that by offering a large reward for her diſcovery, his intereſt would predominate over his revenge. After warmly acknowledging the obligation conferred on him by the zeal and kindneſs of Lord Fitz-Vernon, and concurring in the meaſures adopted to recover his child,

Mr. Beauchamp entreated to know who the young gentleman was that appeared ſo much intereſted in the fate of his Anzoletta, and where he was at preſent?

The Earl, with ſome heſitation, replied, "that his name was Paget, that he was deſcended from a collateral branch of his own family, and was now engaged in preparations for the purſuit of the villains who had deprived them of his ward. I muſt confeſs," continued Lord Fitz-Vernon, "that I believe Paget loves her; but I have never encouraged this attachment, as I did not conceive myſelf at liberty to diſpoſe of her hand without

without the conſent of a father, whom I was led by the Signior's laſt injunctions to believe would one day reclaim her."

Lord Fitz-Vernon could not reſtrain a painful glow from mantling on his cheek as he pronounced this ſentence; and conſcious of the mean diſſimulation a blind paſſion had induced him to be guilty of, his confuſion increaſed to ſo great a degree when Beauchamp proceeded to thank him for this additional proof of the delicacy of his friendſhip towards his daughter, that the emotion of the Earl's countenance attracted his notice.

tice. "The attachment is perhaps reciprocal," continued Beauchamp, ſmiling ſignificantly, "and I cannot blame you for ſuffering the heart of my Anzoletta to intereſt itſelf for an object apparently ſo amiable."

"Indeed, my dear Beauchamp, returned Lord Fitz-Vernon, endeavouring to re-compoſe his features; "I have never interrogated Miſs Zadoſki on this ſubject. But had I not beſt retire and expedite the departure of my couſin, from whoſe vigilance and reſolution I own I expect ſucceſs."

"Let me at leaſt (cried the anxious father) expreſs how ſenſibly the ardent zeal he diſplayed for my loſt girl affects

affects me; let me aſſure him of my gratitude, however ineffectual (and his voice faltered at the agonizing conjecture) may be his ſearch.

The Earl then conducted him into his library, where Paget was waiting in earneſt converſation with Mr. Brady, to whom he had related the ſubject of their preſent alarm, and fearful of the enthuſiaſm of his couſin's diſpoſition precipitating him in danger, Lord Fitz-Vernon entreated the honeſt curate to accompany him, promiſing him at the ſame time not only to prevent any preſent inconvenience ariſing from his abſence, by writing

writing himſelf to the rector, requeſting him to procure a ſubſtitute during the time he ſhould remain in London, and likewiſe preſented him with a bank note of twenty pounds to remit to Mrs. Brady, for her immediate uſe, (for the good curate had come to town in the hope of diſpoſing of ſome literary productions) and aſſured him of his future patronage in return for the tender intereſt he had formerly taken in the welfare of his ward: he alſo preſented him to Mr. Beauchamp as the friend of Polletti, and related the manner of their introduction; and after writing a tender billet to his *dear partner*, and receiving the warmeſt

acknow-

acknowledgments of gratitude from Mr. Beauchamp, who loaded Paget with bleſſings and good wiſhes. They proceeded on their expedition, while the Earl and Beauchamp returned to his chamber, where, in compliance with the wiſhes of his noble friend, he proceeded to gratify his curioſity by a recital of the adventures that had befallen him after his departure from Paris, where they parted nineteen years ſince, and whither he had accompanied him with an intention of making, in company with him and two more Engliſhmen of fortune, the grand tour of Europe.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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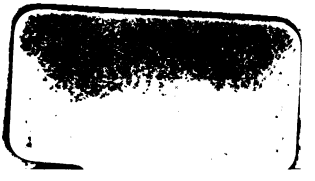
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